

Measuring Fitness to Improve Student Health and Academic Achievement

A recent poll found that 80% of Illinois voters support physical education at every grade level and the majority would like to strengthen Illinois' P.E. requirements.

HB 5397 will:

- Focus on developing physically literate students with the skills for life-long fitness and health through implementation of physical fitness assessment in every school across the state.
- Create a fitness data tracking system in the state to help track improvements over time
- Create a Task Force to develop protocols for fitness testing and reporting to ensure reliability across the state.
- Give schools over 2 years to prepare their P.E. teachers to administer the test to students as part of their class curriculum and fitness improvement programs.

About FITNESSGRAM Testing

The FITNESSGRAM physical fitness testing methodology is a nationally recognized, reliable and valid test to help students assess and achieve their fitness goals, and was recommended for use in schools by the Illinois Enhance P.E. Task Force.

It's a **FREE** resource available to schools through the Presidential Youth Fitness Program.

The FITNESSGRAM methodology tests the fitness components of endurance, muscular strength, aerobic capacity, body composition, and flexibility.

The FITNESSGRAM test is a criterion-referenced assessment, helping students identify areas of self-improvement and not comparing them to others.

1 in 3 Illinois children are overweight or obese. Physical education is critical to helping kids meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day.

The Benefits of Enhancing P.E. and Fitness Include:

Improved Test Scores- Students with good cardio- respiratory fitness at one Illinois school were twice as likely to meet ISAT standards.ⁱ

Improved Academics: Studies show a positive association between fitness and academic achievementⁱⁱ

Better Behavior: A Texas study showed that higher physical fitness was associated with better school attendance rates and fewer disciplinary incidentsⁱⁱⁱ

Improved Health: being physically active reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Regular exercise has been shown to improve muscular endurance and flexibility, reduce stress and improve mental health^{iv}

IAPO organizations that support HB 5397 include:

- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Lakeshore Division
- American Heart Association, Midwest Affiliate
- Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children
- genHkids Coalition
- Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
- Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention
- Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity
- Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Illinois Public Health Institute
- Illinois Society of Public Health Educators (ISOPHE)
- Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium (NIPHC)
- Playworks Illinois
- SEIU Healthcare Illinois, Indiana
- Seven Generations Ahead

(List in formation)

ⁱ Bass, R.W., Brown, D.D., Laurson, K.R., and Coleman, M.M. (2013). *Physical fitness and academic performance in middle school students*. Acta Paediatrica Nurturing the Child. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23621404>.

ⁱⁱ Illinois Enhance P.E. Task Force (2013). Enhancing P.E. in Illinois: How investing in P.E. yields higher achievers. Retrieved December 2, 2013 from http://iphionline.org/pdf/IPHI_Enhanced_PE_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Van Dusen, D.P., Kelder, S.H., Kohl, H.W. III, Ranjit, N., Perry, C.L. (2011). Associations of physical fitness and academic performance among school children. *The Journal of School Health*, 81(12): 733-740. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2011.00652.x

^{iv} Hainer, V., Toplak, H. and Stieh, V. (2009) Fat or Fit: What Is More Important? *Diabetes Care*. 32(suppl 2): S392-S397.

^v Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012). Illinois state nutrition, physical activity and obesity profile. Retrieved September 4, 2013 from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/pdf/illinois-state-profile.pdf>.